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call out to ask whether the patient has recovered or not, and, on being assured that he has, they ascend the ladder and put a bit of the clod in the hole of his ear-lobe, believing that they have taken ample measures to promote his recovery.

In performing the ceremony called "Ta hu law pa law," a bundle containing a handful of chaff, a piece of broken pot, and a few chicken feathers is used to touch the sick person, while "Ta mü to xa, Ta yu ta pleh" are addressed as follows: "O Spirits and very bad Witches, we are cooling your anger lest you look with longing eyes on this person. Restore and heal him. Go back to your places, east, west, north, or south. Return to your own abodes." The bundle is then borne out along a path indicated by the omens and left there. The person carrying it pretends to retire into the jungle, but really returns home.

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In the rite known as "Ta taw the hka heh" the patient's friends carry to a considerable distance a little basket containing a chick and a prepared betel quid. A similar petition to that given above is then uttered, and the chick is split in halves and replaced in the basket, which is hidden in some hollow tree or rock crevice. Again a plea is made, the basket and its contents are left behind, and a circuitous route home is followed, the bushes along the way being cut in order to convince the demons by the marks of the knife that they will be cut by it, should they follow after.

The rite performed when the water-witches are supposed to have enticed a "k'la" away is called "Ta lu hti htu hti." A fowl of one color must be carried down to the water, where a small altar is erected of two rows of twelve posts each, the two rows converging like the rafters of a roof. The fowl is killed and its blood smeared on the posts, four feathers being stuck on each of the corner posts. The lords of the water and the lakes, the water-witches, are then besought, in case the sick person has invaded their province in any way or they have caused his illness, to partake of the fowl, sweet liquor, and rice that are provided and allow the "k'la" to return and the person to recover. The petition closes with the words: "Do not look with longing eyes upon him, but eat your feast here." The sick man's friends then cook and eat the fowl and return home.

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It appears that sometimes the water-witches are offended by a person who is in bathing and cause him to become ill with cramps or indigestion. In such a case rice, saffron, and spices are placed

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upon the head of the offender and then taken to a rock at the waterside. The witches are summoned by repeatedly striking the rock and urged to enjoy their feast there.

The ceremony, "Ta di law kweh leh," is performed with a bundle containing a handful of chaff, bits of broken pot, a piece of bamboo, some scrapings of gold and silver, and a fowl. After the patient has been touched with this bundle, the demons of "Plü" (hades), the king of hades, and the Great Elephant ("Ta do k' the, ta do k' saw") are addressed as follows: "I am exchanging the sick person for a big bird and a big fowl, for quantities of gold and silver. Let his shade depart. If you hold him, go." The bundle is then carried out along the road and laid down, and the fowl is plucked. The latter is brought home, the bushes along the way being beaten with a bamboo with split ends, while the "k'la" is summoned to follow. On arriving near the house, the friends call to those within to see if it has returned. On receiving a favorable reply, they enter, tie up the wrist of the sick person, and cook the fowl.[8]

A different form of the above ceremony is described by Thra Than Bya.[9] According to his account, the friends carry only a fowl to the place on the road and there place a dead leaf on a little mound of earth, after which they call the "k' la" to return. Then they take the fowl home and cook it, and, after the sick one has eaten a morsel, the rest of the family partake.

Another form of the offering by the roadside is called "Ka law ta." In this instance a bamboo post about four feet long is set up, the upper end of which is split and the splints spread apart by weaving in and out a piece of bamboo. Upon this a little mat of loosely woven bamboo is laid, on which are placed three chicken feathers, a few pieces of egg shell, and a roll of cotton blackened with charcoal at three points. The feathers seem to represent a fowl and the cotton a pig, for the one making the offering says, addressing the demons in general: "I am giving you a pig and a fowl. Do not come near me any more. Help me and heal me." This offering differs from any of the others mentioned in this chapter in that it is sym-

[8] I am told that now, with the waning of the faith in these old customs, the person who has taken out the offering occasionally becomes angry if the people in the house do not give a favorable answer concerning the return of th "k' la" and the improvement of the patient, and refuses to repeat the ceremony, as he is supposed to do.

[9] Rev. T. Than Bya, *Karen Customs*, p. 30.

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bolic, and also in the fact that the patient performs the rite in his own behalf.

III. Offerings to the "K'la" Itself

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Sometimes the auspices indicate that the "k' la" of an ill person has departed by reason of fright or from some other cause than being enticed by a malicious demon. The place to which it has gone and the method by which it may be won back are also shown by the omens. In such cases the appeal and offerings are made to the "k' la" itself.

In performing the rite known as "Ta kweh k' la hpa do" (the great ceremony of calling the "k'la"), two black fowls, namely, a cock and a hen, must be killed by wringing their necks. Their internal organs must be cleaned and replaced and the birds cooked whole. They are then laid on a tray on which are three Malay apple leaves, seven lumps of cold rice, and a cup of fragrant water.[10] The tray with its contents is set at the head of the stairs or ladder, and a lighted candle is placed there. A white cotton thread is carried from the tray to the foot of the stairs and fastened. The fragrant water, after being blown upon by the head of the house, is sprinkled on the family and on the stairs.[11] A lump of rice is then charmed and thrown down the stairs, which are beaten with a stick, and the "k' la" of the invalid is summoned. The call is: "Pru-u-u k'la,[12]—heh ke, heh ke. (O Shade, come back, come back.)" If for any reason it is thought that the shade has not heeded this call, the operation is repeated until the family feels assured that it has returned. They then immediately break the string by means of which it has ascended the stairs and throw it away, lest it should again escape. With other pieces of string they tie up the wrists of the sick person and the other members of the family, meanwhile calling the "k' la" to remain. The patient is bathed all over with what is left of the fragrant water and is then expected to recover.

The rite of "Ta kweh k' la," or inviting the "k'la" to return, is performed in the house, like the one described above. The family

[10] The leaves named (those of the "thabye" or *Eugenia malaccensis*) are generally used for this purpose, but I do not know why.

[11] When the Karen on the plains perform these ceremonies, in which the wandering "k'la" is expected to return to the house by the ladder, they retain the old-fashioned notched log that has served from time immemorial as the means of entrance to the house, but that is being superseded in modern houses by flights of stairs. They think the "k'la" will more easily return by the kind of stairs to which it has been accustomed.

[12] "Pru-u-u-" is a sort of trill which the women use in calling their children, pigs, or fowls, as well as their "k' las."

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782 elder takes the stirring-stick from its hole in the fireplace post and
753 strikes the top of the house ladder to attract the attention of the
755 "k'la," which he begs to return, saying: "Pru-u-u we, pru-u k'la, come back, whether you have gone to the west, east, north, or south; come back, whether you are in the bush, jungle, or ends of the earth; come back to your pleasant dwelling, to your comfortable home. I will prepare delicious pork and fowl for you. Eat of your rice and drink of your liquor. Do not wander off any more." Then the animal specified in the divination is killed—pig, fowl, goat, ox, or buffalo—and if a fowl, its bones are examined for the omen, which is favorable in case the holes are even in number. In case one of the animals has been indicated, the performers of the rite look for a rounded gall-bladder. If the auspices are unfavorable, they must repeat the whole operation until they find the conditions satisfactory. The animal is then cut up, cooked, and the feast proceeds. During these ceremonies every member of the family must be present.

787 The rite, "Ta waw k'la" (driving back the "k'la"), has some
782 features not found in the one described in the preceding paragraph
753 and is performed in the jungle and along the paths where the ghost
755 has disappeared, as revealed by the divination. The man of the house splits the end of a bamboo pole into four splints and spreads them into a crude broom, which he takes to the place where the "k'la" became lost. With a prayer similar to that quoted above he calls the wandering "k'la" and beats the bushes all the way home. Before entering, he asks the usual question about the return of the ghost and receives the usual answer. Mounting to the house, he beats the top of the ladder with the stirring-stick, repeating the invitation to the "k'la" to return and then beats the posts of the fireplace, asking repeatedly if it has come back and getting the same reply. Finally, the animal or fowl is killed and the omen declared. In case it is favorable, the feast proceeds.

The rite for the return of a "k'la" thought to have been driven off by the wind is called "Ta yaw ke a k'la." A bracelet suspended by a string from the tip of a slender bamboo over a cup containing a little sticky rice and a hard-boiled egg. The elder strikes the cup with the stirring-stick and begs the "k'la" to come back out of the winds, the storm, the firmament, from near the stars or the moon, and eat the egg. The string supporting the bracelet is

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usually poorly spun, and the suspended object twists back and forth until finally the string parts, and the ornament drops into the cup. A person standing near claps a cloth over the receptacle to confine the "k'la." If an air-space is found at the end of the egg, it is a sign that the shade has returned; if not, the experiment must be repeated.[13]

The ceremony, "Ta hpi htaw ke a k'la," is in order when a person's sickness is attributed to the detention of his "k'la" under the water or in a swampy place. The auspices having shown the necessity for this rite and the kind of creature to be sacrificed, the performers of the rite throw up a little mound at the foot of the ladder with a sharp bamboo stick or other implement, and set upon it in order bundles of glutinous rice and jars or bamboo joints of liquor. The victim, say a fowl, is plucked, and, after the shade has been attracted by making a noise, it is addressed as the great "k'la": "If you have been drowned in the water or are anywhere under the mud or the ground; if you have been led astray in the water or the mire," says the leader, "I beg you to come back to your pleasant dwelling, to your comfortable home. Come eat delicious pork and toothsome chicken. Come and partake of sweet liquor and white rice." The victim is struck on the head with the stirring-stick, killed, and the omens examined. If these prove to be favorable, the fowl is cooked and the feast is held. As is usual in such ceremonies when the shade is believed to have returned, the wrist of the patient is tied with string to prevent its wandering again. A piece of the string, together with a morsel of the rice and meat, is placed on the fontanel ("hko hti") of the patient, which is considered the seat of the "k' la."

PROPHETS AND ELDERS

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The propitiatory sacrifices discussed in the first section of this chapter are evidently tribal functions and are, therefore, inaugurated by the chiefs. Formerly men called "wi," especially designated as prophets, were consulted to interpret the auspices. On occasion they went into trances in order to reveal secrets. Their office in most of the Karen tribes was for life or while they maintained a good character, and it involved a knowledge of the ancient poetry of

[13] See p. 207 of Chapter XX (Funeral Customs) for a similar method of determining the presence of the "k' la" of the dead.

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the folk by which the traditions and customs were handed down from generation to generation. Among the Bwe, who seem to have esteemed priests more than the other tribes, there were four of these prophets who presided over the great sacrifice, the eldest being regarded as high priest. When one of them died, the elders assembled and chose which of his sons should inherit the office. Then, earrings, a headband, richly ornamented clothing, and a silver-mounted sword were secretly prepared for the ceremony of installation. A delegation of the elders took these gifts to the house of the chosen one, an elder going ahead to ascertain that he was at home. The party, being assured of his presence, surrounded the house to prevent his escape, which he must feign attempt. The presents were then cast before him. If he really desired to escape, he must do so before the house was surrounded.

In case the elders did not find the chosen successor at home, they laid in wait for him either by the path approaching the house or within the house itself. Sometimes an elder climbed up under the roof, hid himself until the man returned, and then dropped the gifts at his feet. The appurtenances of the priestly office, having been presented, could not be refused.[14] In some instances a "wi" was also a chief, serving thus as a leader in the tribe and in its magic. In any case he was a most important personage and was held in awe by the people.[15] Only a few of these men now remain.

The healing offerings dealt with in the second and third sections of this chapter fall generally within the province of the village elders, or are often performed by the members of the family of the sick person, for almost everybody knows more or less how to make the offerings, though this is not so true at the present time as it was a generation ago.

[14] Bunker, *Soo Tha*, pp. 66, ff.

[15] For the "wi's" connection with magic, see p. 275.

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whole family. She is the "Bgha a' hko." This custom seems to hark back to the matriarchal stage of development among the Karen, as also does the fact that the groom goes to live with the bride's family. Why a woman should hold the place of honor at the "Bgha" feast has been "explained" to me in two ways, namely, (1) that a female was the first person to fall under the influence of "Mū kaw li" (Satan) in the orchard, and (2) that as the woman is the more susceptible to sickness, she properly has more to do with the offerings and should take the leading part in making them. The Karen maintain that the elders are responsible for these explanations and that the ceremonial of the "Bgha" feast has come down from time immemorial.

There are three kinds of "Bgha" feasts. The most familiar kind is that observed by the members of the immediate family when one of their number has fallen sick, in case divination shows that his illness is due to his having offended the "Bgha." In such a case the family must at once join in a feast. The second kind of feast is that observed as a preventive of possible sickness and as a means of keeping on good terms with the "Bgha." This is known as "ta aw bwaw a' tha" (eating to strengthen one's heart). The third kind of feast is that participated in by all the kindred, when the most elaborate rites are celebrated. Such a feast is called "ta aw saw ke saw na." While there is a general resemblance among the feasts held all over the Karen country, the various tribes and even parts of the same tribe differ in the details of their observances.

In the case of an illness found by divination to be due to the "Bgha," the ceremonial of the feast among the Sgaw Karen of the Tharrawaddy district and in the Pegu Hills, is as follows: After a pot of rice has been set on the fire to boil, a fowl is caught and killed, and its feathers are burned off in the fireplace. It is then cut up and cooked with salt and a chili and placed on the table or family tray. The father, mother, and children in the order of their ages severally partake of a morsel, after which they eat their meal together. If the parents of the father and mother are living, the feast is held in the morning; but if they are dead, it is held in the afternoon. On the following morning a pig is caught, brought into the house, and its legs are tied together. It is then killed by strangulation or by wrenching the neck, care being taken not to break any of its bones or bruise its skin lest some of its blood should be spilled. The body of the pig is then run through lengthwise on

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a spit, its bristles are burned off, and it is then carried into the house and laid at the head of the sleeping-mats. The father and other members of the family touch the side of the animal with the tips of their fingers. In Shwegyin and Siam this rite is still observed, but in many other localities it has been discontinued. The pig is now ready to be cut up and cooked, after which the members of the family each taste of the meat in turn, avoiding eating anything from the hind-quarters that day and from the fore-quarters the next, in case their grandparents are living. If, however, their grandparents are dead, they may eat from any part of the animal. After having thus each taken a morsel, they complete their meal. If any is left after the feast, it is not uncommon nowadays for the family to invite in some of their neighbors to finish the remainder. This is contrary to the old practice among the Karen.

In the remoter regions, where the complete ceremonial is still observed, its main features differ but little from those described above, but the details are much more fully observed, and I will, therefore, describe the ceremonial as it is carried out in those areas. The rice having first been cooked, the water from it must be poured into the fireplace and the pot set down in the wet ashes, while the chicken is caught by the wife who brings the fowl into the house and hands it to her husband. He holds it under his arm, strokes its beak toward the point, and says: "Take away sickness. Remove weariness and swellings. Give me life and health for a hundred years." Then the wife and each child in turn stroke the chicken's beak, while the father repeats the same prayer for each one. He next wrings the fowl's neck, scalds the bird in a jar of water, plucks its feathers and carefully puts them in a receptacle by the fire, and removes the intestines and places them with the feathers. The flesh is cut up, cooked, and served, each member of the family taking a morsel. The father now places a small quantity of the rice and chicken on a tray and summons "the great ancestors of old" to partake. Meantime, the family eat the feast, after which the father throws away the offering. The pig is eaten on the following day, but in Siam two days are allowed to elapse before this part of the feast is celebrated. In preparation for this event the father goes into the jungle after an early breakfast, taking with him one of his children or, if he has no child, calling some other boy to accompany him. He carries a small basket and his "xeh" or sickle. He returns with two pieces of bamboo, each two full joints in

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length, some plantain leaves, and a pole long enough to serve as a spit for the pig. He cuts one of the bamboo pieces into two sections in which to cook the rice and curry, and splits the other bamboo into withes. After the rice has been cooked, the mother mixes a little of it with chaff, puts some of it in a small pot and a lump of it on top of the pot, besides sprinkling water on the fireplace.

A Sgaw Karen Grandmother

Later the lump of chaff and rice is used as a bait in catching the pig that is to become the offering. Two withes of the outside and two of the inside of the bamboo are used in tying the feet of the animal, and one more of each kind to bind the feet together. Other withes are wound around the snout, one turn being passed through the mouth, which is thus closed securely. The pig is now carried into the house and laid on plantain leaves spread on the floor, a winnowing-tray being placed in front of it along with the

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pot of rice and chaff and a small bamboo cup ("maw"). Three times in succession the father touches first the pig and then the pot with the tips of his fingers, while addressing the "Bgha" as follows: "Avert all sickness from me. Let me be well and live a long life. I am feeding you with pork. Therefore, help me." The same petition is uttered as the other members of the family touch the pig in their turn. The father then strikes the animal three times with his "xeh" and stabs it thrice with a knife, but not to a greater depth than the width of four fingers. The killing of the pig is completed by binding its snout in a wet cloth to smother it and by wrenching its neck. The withes are now removed from its feet, and the carcass is carried to another part of the room and washed. After being laid again on the plantain leaves, an opening is made in its belly for the purpose of examining the gall-bladder. If this organ is plump, the omen is favorable and the feast may proceed. Otherwise, another pig must be sacrificed on the following day, and if necessary another, until a gall-bladder is found that meets the required conditions.

A satisfactory offering having been obtained, the intestines are removed and the carcass is impaled lengthwise on the sharpened stick brought from the jungle, and the bristles are burned off at a new fireplace built for the feast in the inner room of the house. After the body is washed it is butchered: first the head and stabbed shoulder being cut off in one piece, then the hind leg on the same side, next the fore and hind legs on the other side. The carcass is now opened down the front and down the middle of the back, the side that was stabbed being first removed and prepared. The wife puts the currypot on to boil, while her husband cuts up the meat, including the heart, liver, and lungs, some of which is dropped into one of the bamboo joints over the top of which a plantain leaf is tied. The other bamboo joint is filled with rice, and both vessels are set over the fire and watched carefully to prevent burning. However, the vessels must not be removed from the fire before their contents are thoroughly cooked, else the offering would be offensive to the "Bgha."

The rest of the pork is cooked in the currypot, which the wife has set on the fire. The wife must clean out the intestines, which she does outside the house. When she brings them in, the husband brushes off any ashes that may be on the top of the little pot and covers the mouth of it with a plantain leaf. He makes

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little holes in the covering and inserts short pieces of bamboo down into the pot obliquely, so as to hold the cover on. He then pours water in through these holes. He now makes a sort of standard, called "thi keh," out of a strip of bamboo. The bamboo is split into three strips, but not entirely separated. They are bound together at three points with withes, and then the two outer ones are broken between the bindings but only enough to make them stand out like arms akimbo. The lower ends of each of the side strips are bent out and then brought back and inserted in a hole, or under the lowest withe around the stock. This is set in the pot. What the significance of this is, neither my informant could tell me, nor do the reference books help one to find the meaning of it.

When the food has been cooked, the husband empties the rice on one tray and the pork on another; and the members of the family—father, mother, and the children in succession according to their ages—each take a morsel from both trays. Then the father takes a swallow from a pot containing water or liquor, being followed by the others in due order. He also pours out two cups of the liquid for the ancestors of the family and throws the rest away. He collects into a bundle the withes used in tying the feet of the pig and hangs it on the end of one of the floor joists at the rear of the house. Finally, he washes his hands and returns to join his family in finishing the feast.

In case the grandparents are living, they are summoned to the "Bgha" feast and arrive on the evening preceding the event. After breakfast next morning the preparations are made much the same as described above, but include the providing of three little bamboo cups ("maw") and the construction of a tiny model of a house ("hi hpo hkeh") about a foot long, which is set in front of the pig and in which the favorable gall-bladder of the animal is placed, together with its heart and the lung and kidney of the side that has been stabbed. The organs of the other side and any blood remaining in the abdominal cavity are placed on a tray. Only the flesh of the stabbed side is used at once. While it is cooking, the wife pounds some rice, moistened with a little water, until it is reduced to fine flour. Two of the cups are filled with a mixture of this flour, chopped pork, and a little blood, and hung over the fire to cook. The wife washes the intestines of the animal, while her husband arranges the "thi keh" as before and dishes out the food for the family. When all is ready each member of the household partakes of a morsel and

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782 sip of liquor, the grandfather and grandmother coming after the
753 children. This ceremonial being completed, all eat together. In
● 755 the afternoon the intestines are cooked and eaten. Next morning
the husband removes the heart, lung, and kidney from the miniature
796 house, cuts them up, and cooks them. These are eaten, the room is
787 cleaned, the little house is thrown away, the grandparents return
home, and the sick person for whom the feast has been held is sup-
posed to recover.

In some places the intestines of the pig and the blood-stained plantain leaves are put in a basket and hung on a tree in the jungle as an offering to "Thi Hko Mü Xa," the lord of the demons.

782 The second kind of "Bgha" feast is not preceded by divination.
602 It is held not to cure sickness in the family, but to prevent it. When one of the parents begins to worry lest illness may visit the family, the "Bgha" is feasted and venerated and the hearts of the family are thus strengthened, as they express it. Hence, this feast is called "Ta aw bwaw a' tha." The ceremonial does not differ from that described above.[1]

The third kind of feast is that in honor of the great "Bgha," in which all the kindred by blood participate. It is, therefore, called the feast of the whole family ("ta aw saw ke saw na"). The eldest female of the family, the grandmother if living, or if not her eldest daughter or granddaughter, presides as chief priestess or head of the "Bgha" ("Bgha a' hko"). If the feast is held annually, it occurs in April or May; but the priestess may fix a time at her pleasure when she feels that the "Bgha" should be honored and propitiated. Those required to attend this feast of the kindred are the full brothers and sisters of the priestess, her sons, daughters, and daughters' children; but her husband, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, and their sons, together with her sons-in-law and the sons of her sons, are excluded and eat their feast with their own kindreds.

The eligible members of the family having assembled, the grandmother holds a pair of fowls, male and female, by their heads and says: "O Lord of the demons, we are offering to thee the flesh of fowls and pigs. Free us from all illness." After wringing the necks of the chickens, she orders their feathers to be burned off preparatory to cooking them with salt and chili only. Rice is also cooked. These viands are set out and the priestess eats a morsel, followed by her sons and each of the other relatives in the

1 [For description of ceremony, see p. 248 ff, Cat. 116 - Analysis

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Certain stones ("ler na") and some plants of the ginger family ("paw na") are credited with having the ability to consume food. If offered raw flesh and blood, they prefer the latter. The owners of such specimens can cause harm to any one against whom they have a grudge. In case one of the "ler na" is sent to a person, it takes on the appearance of the owner and produces the death of the recipient. Such stones, according to report, are usually picked up in swampy places, glow in the dark, and will eat into one's flesh like an acid. It seems to be customary to send one of these carnivorous stones to the intended victim when he is in a weakened condition on account of sickness. He is, therefore, in a physical state to experience such an hallucination as that referred to above.

To counteract the effects of the "ler na," a medicine is compounded from the gall-bladder of one who has suffered a violent death and been stolen from the grave at night. The remains of the gall-bladder are mixed with the charred dust scraped from the bamboos used in piercing the corpse when it was being burned. These ingredients are moistened with water and shaped into a ball, from which the patient takes doses when he finds the spell of the magic stone asserting itself. Other fragments of the medicine-ball are pulverized and scattered in the air about the patient. This internal and external treatment is supposed to afford both cure and protection from the menace of the "ler na."[7] Another method (called "po") of preventing witches and wizards from working their evil spells, is by inserting twigs of the indigo plant in the split ends of three sticks, spitting on the twigs, and offering a prayer for deliverance.

Much of the magic of the Karen prophets and "medicine-teachers" is concerned with recalling the "k'las" of sick persons. The multitude of demons and powers by which the tribesman believes himself to be surrounded, renders it next to impossible for him to tell which of these spirits is assailing him when he falls ill. Hence he calls in a diviner, unless he should undertake to consult the chicken bones or make marks on a bamboo, in order to determine for himself the cause of his sickness. When he has learned the cause, he makes offerings to placate the particular spirit concerned. In case his recovery is not as rapid as he thinks it ought to be, he calls in some "wi" to find out what the matter is and what he must do. The "wi" who was summoned to prescribe for a sick grandmother some years ago, inspected the chicken bones several times and, when

7 Dr. Wade, The Karen Thesaurus, new ed., Vol. I, p. 463.

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774 he got a satisfactory divination, placed some rice, cooked chicken,
712 and liquor on a tray and drew it along the floor of the house to the
755 top of the ladder at the entrance. He then ran a string from the tray down the ladder to the ground for the old woman's "k' la" or shade to come up on. The "k' la" did not return because, as the witch-doctor explained, it was held captive in a betel-box by some one. Thereupon, he asked for seven cubits of white cloth, wound it about himself, and lay down to sleep with a "dah" (large knife) and an axe on either side of him. With the shades of these tools in hand his "k' la" was to go and release the shade or spirit of the grandmother. On awaking, the witch-doctor reported that he had had a hard struggle and been shot at by the man who was restraining the old woman's spirit from returning, but that he had succeeded in releasing it. When the doctor unwrapped himself, so the granddaughter of the patient told me, the cloth was riddled with what appeared to be shot holes. The string on the ladder was broken, showing conclusively that the "k' la" had returned at last. A piece of this string was now tied around the patient's wrist to prevent her spirit from again escaping. Needless to say, the old woman recovered her health.

764 A ceremony is sometimes observed among the Karen to keep
789 the "k' la" of a deceased person from aimlessly wandering about and to beguile it into remaining with the corpse, until it shall depart to the king of spirits. In this ceremony the coffined body is placed in the center of the floor. A slender rod of bamboo is inserted in a hole in the coffin lid, a thread reaching from the tip of the bamboo to the floor. This thread has small tufts of cotton and bits of charcoal tied to it in alternate order throughout its length. Under the loose end of the thread a small cup containing a hard-boiled egg is placed. A silver or brass ring hangs at the end of the thread just over the cup. In case the thread is drawn downward with some force so that it vibrates or breaks, the "k' la" is supposed to have returned from its wanderings, otherwise not. Colonel MacMahon relates that he watched an experiment of this kind, but that when he required everybody to go a considerable distance from the cup, nothing happened.[8]

826 Among the Karen and Burmese the abdomen is held to be the
828 seat of the passions and the diseases, varying moods and bodily

[8] A similar ceremony is gone through at noon of the last day of the funeral rites. See *ante*, p. 287; Col. A. R. MacMahon, *The Karens of the Golden Chersonese*, p. 188; Cross, in the *Journal, American Oriental Society*, Vol. I.

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928 and causes all kinds of trouble, even sudden death. To avoid coming
157 in contact with this smell, they usually do any frying that may be
753 necessary out-of-doors and hold their hands over their noses to keep off the dread danger. For curative purposes smelling-salts are popular among both Karens and Burmans, when they can be bought in bazaar. Many of the medicines contain asafoetida and other pungent-smelling ingredients, which are thought to have an immediate effect on the patient. Bitter and acrid-tasting drugs are also in great favor.

755 Apart from such remedies the Karen "medicine-teachers" re-
278 sort to disgusting concoctions of the scrapings from the horns of the sambur, the hair and genitals of certain animals, tigers' and leopards' whiskers, certain parts of human corpses, the body hair of human beings, dung of all kinds, the scrapings from the charred ends of bamboos used in piercing corpses on the funeral pyre, etc. The urine of one sex is sometimes prescribed as a liniment for persons of the opposite sex. The following is a prescription taken from the *Karen Thesaurus*, where it is described as "a grand febrifuge": "Take the umbilical cord cut from a new-born child, the undigested kernels from the dung of a dog, white and red onions, ginger and black pepper in equal quantities; mix thoroughly and make into pills the size of the end of the little finger; dose, one at a time to be taken in hot water." [11]

278 The formulae for other kinds of pills are even more disgusting than that just given. Draughts, lotions, liniments, smelling-compounds, liquids for bathing, hot and cold applications; herbs and other things to be hung over the patient, placed under his bed, or in an adjoining room, are among the strange mixtures that might be enumerated without interesting any but the curious.

[11] *The Karen Thesaurus*, new ed., Vol. I. p. 641.

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782 787 823 a second time and if necessary a third, in order to obtain a favorable response.

755 The Karen esteem the gall-bladder of a certain variety of fish as a valuable medicine, but assert that during the early days of August this medicinal organ becomes enlarged and "hot" (that is, flabby). They, therefore, consider it necessary to desist from work, in order to restore the gall-bladder to its normal condition and efficacy. During the other months this medicine is thought to be strong and useful in certain severe illnesses.

751 784 The time for gathering the herbs of which dyestuffs are made, is determined by divination. If, however, some one happens to pick them on a day found to be unfavorable, he becomes subject to a tabu, lest colds and coughs should spread throughout the village. To prevent this epidemic, the erring person must cut a sheaf of tall grass and set it up in the ashes of his fireplace, and when the other villagers come in they must spit on it. An elder then takes up the grass, saying: "May all coughs and colds be prevented. May we not catch them." Next, he leads the people out into a field, where he plies their heads and the stumps in the field with the sheaf until it is broken, meantime calling out: "Beat here. Beat there. Beat the tails of the demons and woodpeckers. Do not bring us illnesses, coughs, or colds." When he has finished, he leaves the frayed grass against a stump, and they all return to their houses. Finally, the elder asks in a loud voice: "Is every one well?" and they all shout back: "All are well." This is repeated three times, after which they all shut their doors and refrain from work during the rest of the day.

784 626 While all of these numerous tabus have helped to nourish the ancient superstitions of the Karen, it is well to remember that some of them, in the absence of other social and moral sanctions, have exercised a beneficial influence. Among the latter are the tabus against marriage outside of the tribe, and especially outside of the race. These tabus have been instrumental in maintaining the integrity of the various tribes and of the people as a whole, and in enabling the Karen to live largely apart from the corrupting influences of neighboring peoples. Other tabus have served to magnify the importance of the religious rites and to enforce a stricter morality than prevails among some primitive races. It is obvious that these benefits have been secured at a great economic cost, when one considers the large number of holidays which falls